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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 2nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 29 March 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of Vice-Chairman *(continued)*

2. **The Chairman** recalled that, at its previous meeting, the Committee had postponed election of the Vice-Chairman from the Group of African States, as consultations were still under way. Those consultations had now been completed and the African Group had nominated Mr. Luc Joseph Okio of the Congo as its candidate.

3. *Mr. Okio (Congo) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.*

Special mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands

4. **The Chairman** recalled that, at its previous meeting, the Committee had decided to dispatch a special mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands from 2 to 9 April 2006. As the Committee was aware, the Organization had adopted a six-month budget, which had affected programmes and activities across the board, including those of the Committee. Accordingly, much of the Chairman's work over the past month had been to ensure that the decolonization agenda was not unduly affected by the temporary budgetary shortfall. There had been strategic deliberations on the matter between the Office of the Chairman, the General Assembly Affairs Branch and the Executive Office. He had circulated the substantive correspondence on the matter.

5. It was important to carry out the Committee's activities, even under the current extraordinary budgetary circumstances and despite the bureaucratic hesitancy in moving forward. In recent years, the Committee had faced the challenge of remaining relevant in the eyes of many people in the Territories, given the propensity for unimplemented studies and analyses requested by the General Assembly. Instead of abandoning those activities, the Bureau had therefore been working diligently to reassess the costs, composition and duration of the Special Mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands and reassess the arrangements for the 2006 Pacific Regional Seminar, to be held in Dili, Timor-Leste, from 23 to 25 May.

6. Accordingly, he had held informal consultations with Bureau members and, through them, with the regional groups regarding the composition of the Special Mission. He had also held consultations with the Office of the Chief Minister of the Turks and Caicos Islands regarding the logistics of the mission. After reviewing the tentative programme of work and available resources, it had been concluded that the mission would consist of three Committee members. It had also been recommended that the mission should be two days shorter and take place from 2 to 7 April in order to allow time to visit the islands of Providenciales and Grand Turk, the capital. The Special Mission would examine political, economic and social developments in the Territory and provide information about the role of the United Nations and the Committee's mandate to the Government and people of the Territory. The special mission was expected to submit a report to the Committee for its consideration.

7. The programme of work envisaged meetings with the Chief Minister, the Governor, Cabinet members, the leader of the opposition and opposition members of the Legislative Council, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, the Grand Turk Chamber of Commerce and the Chairman of the Public Service Commission. Town hall meetings were also scheduled to take place in Grand Turk, Providenciales and elsewhere.

8. As indicated earlier, the administering Power of the Turks and Caicos Islands, the United Kingdom, concurred with the dispatch of the mission. On behalf of the Committee and on his own behalf, he once again expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to visit the Territory. He also thanked the Executive Office for its flexibility and willingness to assist the Committee in carrying out its work under the current circumstances.

9. The official delegation of the Special Mission would include representatives of Saint Lucia, Fiji and Tunisia and would be accompanied by a representative of the Jamaica Country Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which serviced the Turks and Caicos Islands. UNDP was also supporting the participation of an independent expert, Dr. Carlyle Corbin, who would provide substantive expertise vital to the successful completion of the mission. Similar support had been provided for the Special Mission to Bermuda in 2005. The Special Mission would also be

joined by Ms. Denise Cook, Senior Political Affairs Officer of the Decolonization Unit.

10. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) thanked the Chairman and the Secretariat for all their efforts to make possible the Special Mission, which would be extremely useful in terms of both sharing information with the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and reinforcing the Committee's work. He also thanked the other members of the Committee, in particular the African Group, for re-electing him Vice-Chairman.

11. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) congratulated the representative of the Congo on his re-election to the Bureau. Regarding the Special Mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands, he thanked the Chairman for including a representative of Fiji in the official delegation. Papua New Guinea and Fiji remained committed to the work of the Committee. Noting the current financial constraints, he said that his delegation would have preferred a larger team to carry out the work of the Special Mission. However, he was sure that the team chosen, though small, would be equal to the task. He was also very pleased by the UNDP offer to send a representative and contribute funding, which provided a classic example of how agencies like UNDP could assist the Committee in its work. Lastly, he acknowledged the role of the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the Turks and Caicos Islands in making the mission possible. He looked forward to its successful outcome.

12. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to approve the composition and dates of the Special Mission.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to approve the tentative programme of the Special Mission, which had been prepared in consultation with the territorial Government and had been distributed to Committee members.

15. *It was so decided.*

Pacific Regional Seminar (A/AC.109/2006/1)

16. **The Chairman** recalled that, at its previous meeting, the Committee had accepted the invitation extended by the Government of Timor-Leste to host its 2006 Pacific Regional Seminar. On behalf of the Committee and on his own behalf, he again thanked that Government for its offer. As he had stated at the Bureau meeting, the Committee needed to know early each year which country wished to host that year's regional seminar so that, if it later became necessary to find an alternative location, there would still be time to do so.

17. The Committee would hold its Seminar from 23 to 25 May 2006. As in the past, the Committee would also celebrate the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Secretariat was currently working with the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste on the logistics of the Seminar. It was expected to come up with a cost-free contract so that there would be no additional cost for the Committee. If there were going to be additional costs, the Committee needed to know as early as possible. He had been in close communication with the Executive Office in order to ensure that the quality of the Seminar was not compromised in view of the reduced available resources.

18. At its previous meeting, the Committee had authorized him to hold consultations, as appropriate, concerning the composition of the Committee's official delegation to the Seminar in view of the current budgetary situation. Accordingly, he had made several budgetary proposals to reduce expenses for the Seminar, which had been submitted to the Executive Office for cost analysis. In that connection, the host Government had agreed to provide all the necessary logistics, equipment and transportation free of charge, thus greatly facilitating the task. Those arrangements would be finalized in the Host Country Agreement currently being reviewed by the host Government.

19. Following consultations with the regional groups, the Bureau, at his recommendation, had agreed ad referendum that the Committee would be represented at the Seminar by Saint Lucia, the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic, Cuba and the Russian Federation. The United Nations would bear the cost of travel for those members of the delegation. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the aforementioned composition of its official delegation and authorize the Secretariat to make the necessary travel arrangements for them.

20. *It was so decided.*

21. **The Chairman** said that the Bureau, at its recent meeting, had approved ad referendum a suggested list of experts and organizations to be invited to the Seminar and he would need the Committee's

authorization to finalize it. Owing to budgetary constraints, it would be possible to fund only two experts and two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the Pacific region — Professor Tony Angelo and Falani Aukuso, who were both experts on Tokelau, and Colonized Chamorro Coalition and Comite Rheebu Nu, NGOs from Guam and New Caledonia, respectively.

22. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the participation of the experts and organizations that he had referred to, and to request the Secretariat to proceed with the necessary travel arrangements for those experts and organizations once he had finalized the list.

23. *It was so decided.*

24. **The Chairman** said that, in accordance with the decision of the Committee, invitations would also be extended to other Member States, administering Powers, specialized agencies within the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and additional experts, as well as to some regional organizations, but that they would not be funded.

25. Other adjustments had been necessary in order to stay within the reduced budget. Unfortunately, the usual practice of providing funding to all elected and appointed officials of the Non-Self-Governing Territories had had to be suspended. Accordingly, it was proposed that funding should be extended to representatives of American Samoa, Guam, New Caledonia, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands (representing the Territorial Government and the Caribbean Working Group of Associate Member Countries), Gibraltar and Western Sahara (Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia el-Hamra y de Rio de Oro) (Frente POLISARIO). The remaining Territories would be invited in an unfunded capacity. The number of Secretariat members who would be attending had also been reduced.

26. He drew the Committee's attention to the text of the guidelines and rules of procedure of the Seminar contained in document A/AC.109/2006/1, in particular, the agenda of the Seminar, to which he and the Bureau had devoted considerable attention.

27. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that the Chairman had organized a realistic and accommodating programme under tight budgetary constraints. He welcomed the inclusion of Non-Self-Governing Territory experts and NGOs from the Pacific region. His Government was exploring the possibility of sending a representative to the Seminar at its own expense, as it had done with the Caribbean Regional Seminar the previous year to show its support.

28. **Mr. Díaz** (Cuba) said that the Pacific Regional Seminar was one of the Committee's most important undertakings and no effort should be spared to guarantee its quality and success. Cancelling it was out of the question; rather, cost-saving and any other necessary measures must be considered to offset the severe budgetary constraints.

29. He acknowledged the generous offer of Timor-Leste — a country that itself had been a Non-Self-Governing Territory not long ago — to host the Seminar.

30. **Ms. Borges** (Timor-Leste), speaking on behalf of Ambassador Guterres, thanked Committee members for their words of appreciation. The ambassador was currently in Dili overseeing final arrangements for the Seminar. She wished to reassure the representative of Cuba and other members of the Special Committee that her Government would more than likely be able to bear the costs for which it was responsible.

31. **The Chairman** said that he had made the Secretariat aware of the need to inform the Committee as early as possible of any problems that the reduced budget might create so that measures could be taken to ensure that the Seminar would be held.

32. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Special Committee wished to adopt the guidelines and rules of procedure for the Seminar (A/AC.109/2006/1), including the agenda of the Seminar contained therein.

33. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

34. **The Chairman** said that, despite the temporary budgetary circumstances, the Special Committee must endeavour to carry out its important work. Extraordinary circumstances often required extraordinary measures. In an expression of his commitment to the success of the Committee's work, he had therefore advised the Executive Office that he did not wish to receive daily subsistence allowance for either the Special Mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands or the Pacific Regional Seminar.

35. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the substantial work of the Special Committee in dealing with 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories must be adequately funded. The Special Committee's financial requirements were still well under those of other bodies. If necessary, the Bureau should approach the Secretary-General on the matter.

36. **The Chairman** said that, after studying the figure, the Bureau and the Special Committee would take all necessary measures. In the meantime, out of adversity had come an opportunity to take a fresh look at certain aspects of the special missions and regional seminars and their funding, with a view to their restructuring, and to adapting them to current circumstances.

37. **Mr. Okio** (Congo) supported the remarks by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He thanked the Chairman for forgoing his daily subsistence allowance for the Special Mission and the Seminar and stressed the importance of the Special Committee's continued existence. Budgetary problems were not peculiar to the Special Committee, but rather were common to the entire Organization; sacrifices and cuts should therefore be apportioned equally among the various United Nations bodies.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.